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Volume 44, No. 12, December 2012

Carolina country

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Making Spirits Bright

INSIDE:

Co-ops are reliable

Christmas in Whynot

All about poinsettias

How new technology improves the electricity grid—page 12

How to Make a Splash Without Getting Wet

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Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

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Reliability is our middle name

By Joseph H. Joplin

For about 100 years, Raleigh's newspaper, The News & Observer, has been known fondly as "The Old Reliable." The story is that a salesman and political observer named Wiley Rogers used the term while selling subscriptions. The idea was that you could rely on The News & Observer: it would be there every day, it presented the news fairly but you knew where it stood on the issues. It was a reliable newspaper, whether or not you considered it "The Nuisance and Disturber."

Reliability is important in the electric utility industry, too. People and businesses rely on electricity 24 hours a day, and electricity providers strive to be reliable in delivering that power. You want the electricity to be there when you need it, and generally it's not until the power goes out for some reason that you realize how reliant on it you truly are.

Since they were formed in the 1930s and 1940s, member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives have concentrated on one mission: to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity. You've probably heard and seen that expression — safe, reliable and affordable — many times. Employees at all electric cooperatives are taught to consider this the top priority of their jobs.

So what exactly is reliability to an electric cooperative?

It means maintaining a system that delivers electricity routinely without fail, and to restore delivery when circumstances cause the system to fail.

Over the years, electric utilities have applied best technology to improve and maintain their reliability. There were times when even minor weather events or equipment failures would cause power outages that lasted for hours. By learning how to make delivery systems work better, and how to detect problems, your cooperative has kept those outages to a minimum. Today, co-ops continually inspect equipment and make engineering adjustments to catch problems before they lead to blinks or outages. When was the last time your power failed for an extended period because of something other than a major storm?

Recent surveys show that you appreciate the strides your cooperative has made in providing your power reliably. The 2011 National Survey on the Cooperative Difference conducted for Touchstone Energy co-ops measured member satisfaction with 16 "core services." Results were that North Carolina co-op members rated "provides reliable service" the highest of the 16 services with a score of 9.03 out of a possible 10. In fact the services ranked 2nd to 6th in the survey all related in some way to reliability, in this order: outage restoration, handling problems promptly, treating members fairly, trustworthiness, and delivering on promises. They all scored above 8.5 on the scale of 10.

As technology in this business continues to improve, you are seeing even more progress in the reliability of your service. Just as communication technology advances, so does the technology designed to deliver electricity — from the generating plants, across the transmission grid and your cooperative's poles and lines, to your homes and businesses. [See page 12.]These days we're seeing advances in high-tech detection and repair of line problems, communication between field personnel and central office, grid security, interaction with end-use equipment, and integration of renewable and decentralized energy generation. When you hear the terms "smart grid" and "grid modernization," you're hearing about your cooperative's work in improving and maintaining reliability.

Joseph H. Joplin is general manager of Rutherford EMC, the Touchstone Energy cooperative that serves more than 67,000 member accounts in Rutherford, McDowell, Polk, Cleveland, Burke, Gaston and Lincoln counties and parts of Caldwell, Catawba and Mitchell counties.

Making sense

I just finished reading the September issue of your magazine while riding the train from Raleigh to Charlotte. Your opening editorial about cooperative businesses and the article on "What Goes Up Stays Up" were both very informative for me. My district doesn't have electric co-op service, so I don't have much direct experience with how your organizations operate. It now makes more sense to me.

I also enjoyed the article on organic cotton and making the products entirely in-state.

Thought you might like to know that a legislator actually reads.

Rep. Ruth Samuelson, NC House Dist. 104, Charlotte

Scaly Mountain skating

The November Carolina Country featured places to ice skate but left off Scaly Mountain Outdoor Center in Scaly Mountain. We have an ice skating rink as well as tubing, and we are members of Haywood EMC. (828) 526-3737. www.scalymountain.com

Sheila Huffman, Santa Rosa Beach, Fla., Haywood EMC

The tree hunt

When my sisters and I were children, we anticipated with joy the annual Christmas tree hunt with our Dad. We would tromp through the woods that surrounded our house to find the perfect Christmas tree. Dad never had money for expensive bought trees, and if he had, it would have ruined the fun of our search to find the right evergreen tree on our own land. Often, there would be snow, and we would tromp through the woods in our little snow boots, singing Christmas carols, as the cold air nipped our noses. We also kept our eyes open for holly with red berries to decorate the house.

When we returned home, Dad set up the tree and put on our strand of big lights. Then we decorated our tree with homemade popcorn garland and artificial snow that Mama made from Ivory Snow detergent. Daddy topped it off with an angel. It was always beautiful!

Sharon Cantrell, Mill Spring, Rutherford EMC

A good girl's tree

When I was a child, one of my greatest joys during the holidays was sitting in our living room, lit only by the glow of the Christmas tree, and dreaming about the presents Santa would leave for all the good girls and boys. I worked hard to be a good girl, especially the week before Christmas. This past year I tried to recapture those wondrous moments with my photography. This is the Harless family Christmas tree from 2011.

Janis Harless, Jefferson, Blue Ridge Electric

Here today...

The photo that ran in our October magazine asking "Where Is This?" showed the old Jackson store on Hwy. 13 near Spivey's Corner, Sampson County, just a couple of weeks before it collapsed all together.

"It must have known that it would make its last stand in the Carolina Country," said Linda Jackson by phone a few days after the building collapsed onto itself on Oct. 18, 2012. Amy Rhodes sent us this picture of the building the day after it came down.

Linda Jackson told us that "Mr. Willie" Jackson built the store in the late 1800s or early 1900s from timber he cut from his farm. "The wood inside is fantastic," she said. She should know: she spent some years inside finishing furniture after the building outlived its usefulness as a store. "He built it to have provisions for the people who lived around here and who couldn't get to town very easily," Ms. Jackson said.

Soon after Mr. Willie died in 1947, at a time when people could more easily drive to town, the store was converted to a dwelling for Jackson Farm workers. His son Pernon ran the farm then. Later it was used for storage and for Linda Jackson's furniture-stripping activities. Mr. Willie's grandson, the late Richard Jackson, was Linda's husband, and their son, Richard Jackson Jr., owns the property now.

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JACOB'S LOG:

A hotrod Christmas

By Jacob Brooks

I can remember it like it was just yesterday. It was 6 a.m. and, of course, my older brother Josh had me up as soon as his feet hit the floor. There was no delicacy to his methods of waking me. His usual course of action was to blindly throw a pillow in my general direction hoping to hit my face or some part of my body. Waking me was his only goal, and it didn't matter how. Even though the impact of whatever object he threw at me stunned good and hard, all was forgiven this time: it was Christmas morning. It was his job to wake me up. The sibling code states that whichever sibling is the first to rise on Christmas morning must wake up everyone else. We didn't write the law; we just lived by it.

We rushed into Mom's and Dad's room to wake them up, but it was always like pulling teeth. After they purposely took a lifetime to come out, we all gathered around the tree, prayed as a family, thanked the Lord for His son and the purpose of the day, and then started opening presents. Josh and I received the usual allotment of clothes, socks and embarrassing matching sweaters. We usually got a toy or two, but this time none were to be found. It also appeared that Santa had mixed up his route and forgot to drop in. Josh and I assumed we had been left bags of coal. Talk about a boy's world crashing down on top of him. At the resourceful age of 9, I already began convincing myself that coal would come in handy for cookouts. But who was I kidding?

When it seemed like all hope was lost, Dad piped up: "Hey, boys, what's that outside?"

Whenever we played "Dukes of Hazzard," I had to be Luke, but whatever.

Josh and I looked at each other then darted for the door. I peered through the glass and there it was: a go-kart.

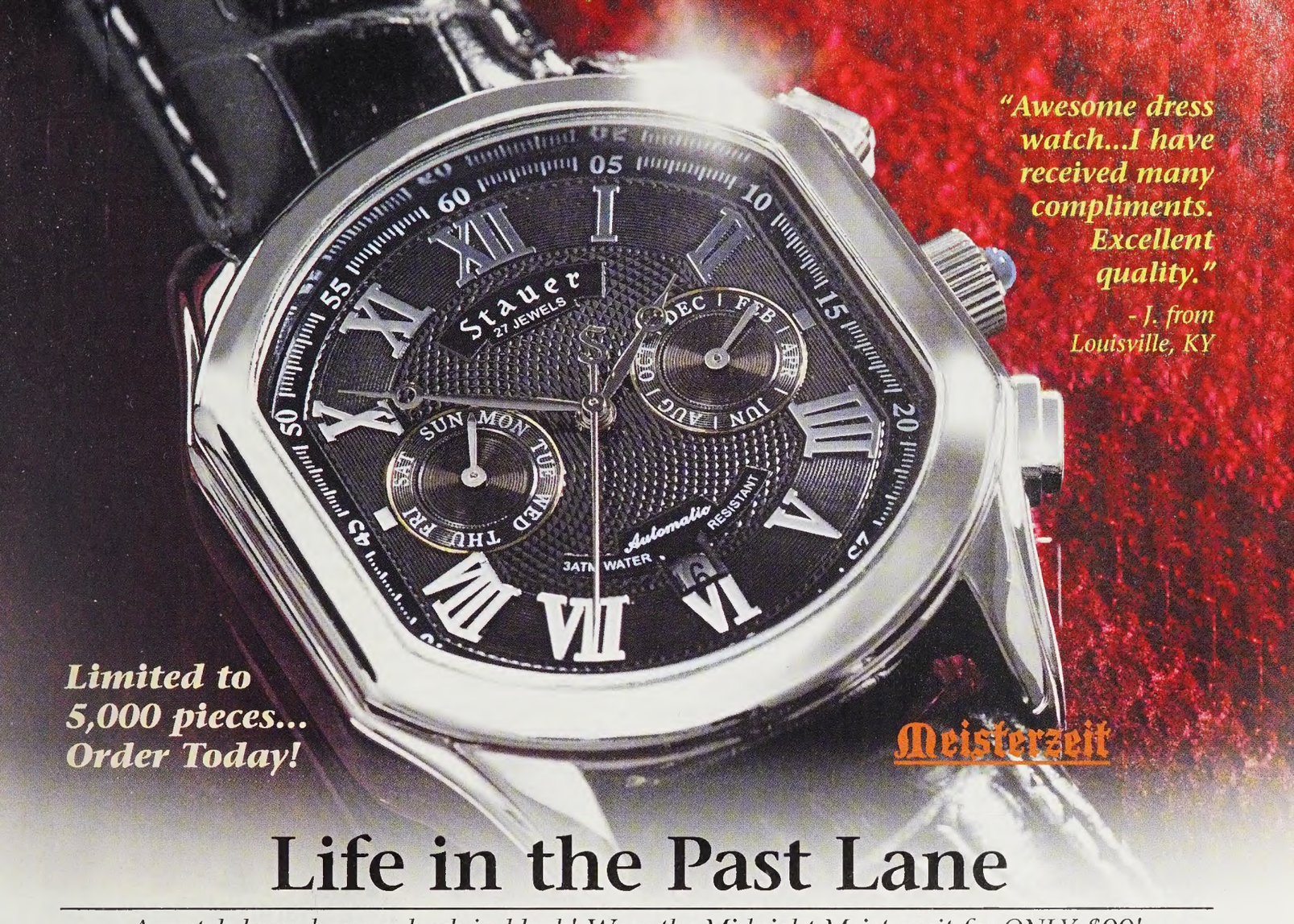
Sitting on a blanket of snow was a 5.5hp go-kart that made NASCAR stock cars look weak. Before me was a chariot of adventure. That yellow beauty was everything I could have asked for. It was Richard Petty's race-car, a monster truck, and an army tank all rolled into one. It became the General Lee whenever Josh and I played "Dukes of Hazzard." (I always had to be Luke, but whatever.) It was the Batmobile whenever Josh and I played "Batman & Robin." (I always had to be Robin, but whatever. You see the pattern there.)

Josh and I wore the tires off of that machine and all the grass off the yard. Every evening when we hopped off the school bus, we headed straight for our go-kart. Josh would flip on the switch, I would yank the pull-start motor, and off we'd go. Dad couldn't keep enough fuel around the house. We would often get in trouble for stealing the lawnmower gas and putting it in the go-kart, but when you are in the middle of running from Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane, you don't have time to rationalize about which gas can is off limits.

We simply had the need for speed. Even though it topped out around 30 mph, we spent our time trying to convince our friends that our go-kart could go 80 mph. I still believe on some level that it actually could.

I spent hours upon hours of my childhood screaming my head off while riding shotgun with Josh in our little yellow go-kart. We lived and breathed for the time spent behind the wheel. And to this day, there are still parts of our yard where grass simply won't grow.

Jacob Brooks served as the electric cooperatives' Youth Leadership Council national spokesman in 2010 and remains active in the annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. He attends Appalachian State University.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Oceanfront houses in the ocean at Rodanthe village on Hatteras Island, where the force of the storm Sandy undermined and buckled Hwy. 12 that runs down the barrier island.

Superstorm Sandy battered beach towns

The massive "superstorm" Sandy in late October lashed North Carolina's coast from Zeke's Island to Knotts Island, but electric cooperatives in the coastal area experienced relatively few power outages.

As Sandy turned inland to wreak havoc in Mid-Atlantic states north of here, the storm's collision with a jet stream from the Upper Midwest caused snow and scattered power outages in North Carolina's mountain communities.

A furious surf in high tropical force winds and high tides pounded the Outer Banks during the full moon weekend of Oct. 27–28 and into Monday. Ocean tidal surge ripped through dunes in Kitty Hawk, flooding houses two blocks west of the beach highway, and tore up Hwy. 12 at the always-vulnerable S Curves north of Rodanthe village. Electric power and cell phone service were disrupted in parts of Hatteras Island, ferry service to Hatteras and Ocracoke suspended, and the Oregon Inlet bridge closed to all but emergency vehicles as officials inspected it for damage. Soundside flooding left up to two feet of standing water on the highway north of Ocracoke.

While no serious injuries due to the storm were reported, a replica of the 180-foot sailing ship "HMS Bounty" sank when overwhelmed by 30-foot waves off Cape Hatteras. The Coast Guard rescued 14 crew, one of whom died, but the captain went missing.

Eight of North Carolina's electric cooperatives sent line crews, totaling nearly 160 people, to Virginia, Maryland and western North Carolina, to assist electric cooperatives with power restoration efforts in the wake of the storms. Cooperatives that sent crews, including equipment and trucks, were: Central EMC, based in Sanford; EnergyUnited, Statesville; Pee Dee EMC, Wadesboro; Randolph EMC, Asheboro; Rutherford EMC, Forest City; South River EMC, Dunn; Union Power Cooperative, Monroe. Brunswick EMC, Shallotte, sent crews to western North Carolina to assist Blue Ridge EMC, Lenoir, with outage restoration.

The deployment of crews is part of a mutual aid agreement shared between the nation's nearly 1,000 electric cooperatives to help one another in times of emergency, such as natural disasters. Electric cooperatives across the country use the same line system engineering standards, which means line crews from any part of the country can quickly help sister cooperatives in restoration efforts.

"Electricity is critical to the way we live, and it's important that people affected by this storm have power restored as quickly as possible," said Nelle Hotchkiss, senior vice president of corporate relations for the N.C. Association of Electric Cooperatives, during the event. "We are happy to help our fellow cooperatives and know that they would do the same for us because it's the cooperative way."

Edgecombe-Martin County system improvements

A U.S. Department of Agriculture announcement published in November's Carolina Country stated that Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, based in Tarboro, will apply $1 million of its recently awarded $6.4 million USDA loan to install automatic meters. The cooperative issued the followed clarification: "Edgecombe-Martin County EMC will receive a $6.4 million loan through USDA. However, only $46,287 is allocated for meter purchases. Edgecombe-Martin County EMC completed its AMI [advanced metering infrastructure] project implementation in 2006. The $6.4 million dollar loan will primarily be used for construction of a new substation that will replace Edgecombe-Martin County EMC's oldest substation and various other system upgrades that will improve reliability and allow for future growth."

It was warm out there

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported that the summer of 2012 in the U.S. was the third warmest since records began in 1895. Temperatures averaged 74.4 degrees from June through August, which was 2.3 degrees warmer than average. The warmest U.S. summer on record was in 2011, and the second warmest was in 1936, NOAA said.

The January–May period of 2012 was the warmest such period on record for the contiguous U.S. The average temperature nationally was 5.2 degrees warmer than average, the largest temperature departure from average of any season since records began. As for the three spring months of 2012, March was the warmest on record, April the third warmest and May the second warmest.

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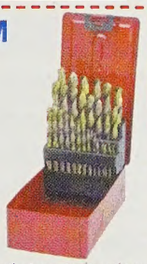

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LOT NO. 68121/69727, CALIFORNIA ONLY

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Try This!

Soundproofing your rooms

Options enhance peace, quiet and efficiency

By Jim Dulley

Homeowners sometimes ask about adding insulation to make their rooms quieter and more efficient. Adding wall insulation can be expensive and above the skill level of most do-it-yourselfers. In many older houses, particularly ones with masonry walls, there is little space inside the walls for additional insulation. In many cases, it's worthwhile to spend more on insulation with the highest R-value per inch, which is a number showing the ability of insulation to resist the transfer of heat. Higher R-values indicate more effective insulation.

Any type of insulation you add to save energy will help somewhat to soundproof the walls, but you need additional improvements for significant noise dampening because sound travels mostly through the wall studs.

In the case of a new room addition, carefully installing fiberglass batt insulation will boost energy efficiency. The key word is "carefully" because fiberglass batts don't provide protection from gaps at the wall joists—spaces must be caulked or spray-foamed before insulating. Every crack and gap reduces the overall efficiency of the new wall.

It's difficult to eliminate all the air gaps in your existing walls, but having foam insulation injected is effective because it fills in spaces to eliminate air leakage.

Another option is to build a second insulated wall against the inside existing wall. You'll lose only about four inches of floor space for the new wall, which you can frame with 2-by-4-foot pieces of lumber, insulate with foil- or kraft paper-faced fiberglass batts, and then cover with drywall. This method is particularly effective for older houses with full masonry walls.

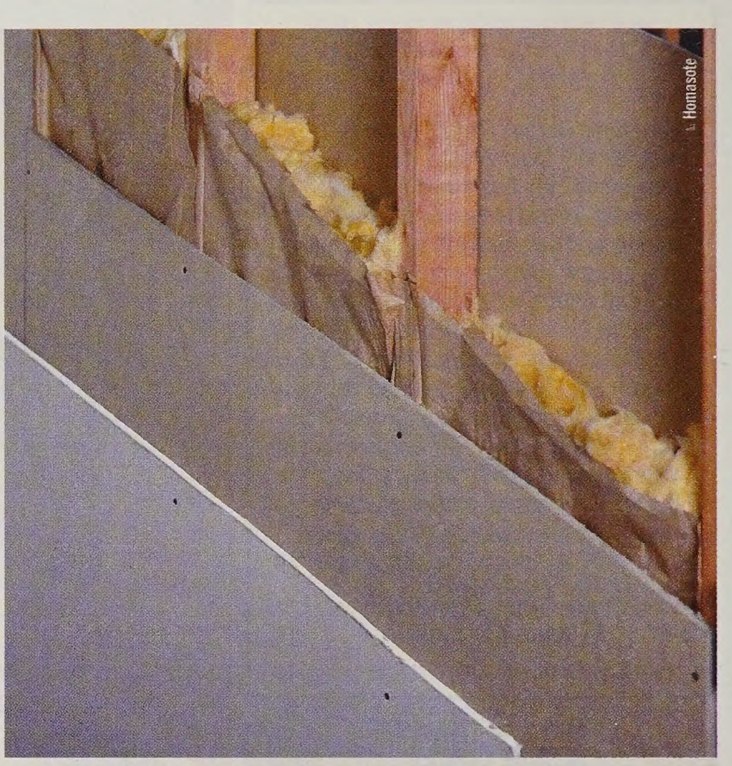
If your windows are old, installing new ones can save energy and block noise. But simply caulking and weather stripping your old windows can have a dramatic effect on reducing noise and improves energy efficiency.

When planning a new room, research STC (sound transmission class) ratings for various types of wall construction. A typical uninsulated interior wall with drywall on each side of 2-by-4 framing has an STC of about 34.

If there are common heating ducts and holes for electrical outlets and phone jacks, the STC of that interior wall may be only 25. Using an inexpensive outlet insulation kit is one more way to improve energy efficiency for this scenario. Adding insulation inside the wall increases the STC by very little—normal conversation would still be easily heard. At the other extreme, with an STC of 66, yelling is barely audible in adjacent rooms.

Another consideration is the type of noise you want to block. If it's normal household sounds and voices, many standard soundproofing methods are effective. If you want to block deep bass vibrations from music or a home theater, a thicker wall is best. You can create that by installing two layers of drywall or using a high-density wallboard. If using drywall you can nail them tightly together or leave them slightly separated for the benefits of decoupling, which helps to block sound transmission.

Send inquiries to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.



L. Homasote

This wall is soundproofed with sound barrier board on each side of an insulated wall. The nails through the drywall are offset from the wall studs to decouple the wall.

These companies offer wall soundproofing products:

Acoustic Sciences (800) 272-8823
www.asc-soundproof.com

Certainteed (800) 782-8777
www.certainteed.com

Homasote (800) 257-9491
www.homasote.com

Owens Corning (800) 438-7465
www.owenscorning.com

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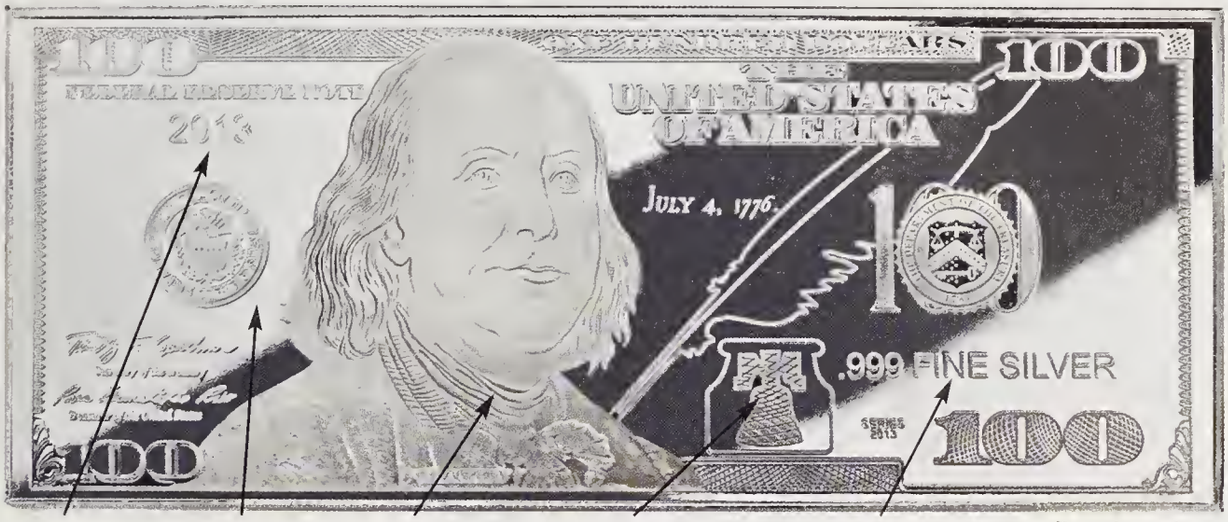

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Modernizing our electric grid

The "smart grid." We've all heard about it. It's discussed frequently on nightly news programs, in newspapers and even in political arenas. But what exactly is it? And what can you, as consumers, expect from it?

Simply put, a modernized electric grid will provide tools that will make electric service more efficient, reliable and affordable. It will also provide you with information and opportunities to control your energy use and eventually even plug into the grid as a generation source. Our electric grid, the nationwide network of poles, power lines and equipment that carries electricity from power plants to homes and businesses, has always been pretty smart. But just as we developed a need for smarter, digital phones, we've developed the need for a smarter, digital electric grid.

What to expect?

Union Power

New grid technology will allow co-op personnel to detect and fix line problems much sooner than they can now.

EFFICIENCY

Historically, electric utility providers, including your electric cooperative, delivered power to homes and businesses and then sent employees to each and every home on the system to read meters. The process ate up employee time and company resources—until now.

With the implementation of technologies to modernize our grid, many electric utilities can read meters from their offices without ever having to send employees out in the field. This reduces operating costs, and because electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, any money saved on day-to-day operations will ultimately be returned to you, cooperative members.

RELIABILITY

Similarly, co-op employees have always had to "ride the lines" to discover the source of a power outage. As the electric grid becomes modernized, electric utilities will take advantage of the grid's two way communication—from the utility to the consumer and then back to the utility—to immediately identify any problems and quickly dispatch crews to fix those problems. This means fewer and shorter power outages for you. Many of North Carolina's electric cooperatives already have this technology in place.

That's not all. Until now, there's been no way to know—until it fails—if equipment within the electric system, like a transformer, is becoming overloaded or worn out. With modern technology, your electric cooperative can use sensors to monitor equipment and proactively repair or replace worn parts, improving reliability and reducing expenses by staving off potential power outages.

AFFORDABILITY

Applying digital technology to the electric grid creates a significant savings opportunity by delaying the construction of new power plants. Digital devices will be added to the electric grid that will allow your electric cooperative to better manage its load (the total amount of power being drawn at one time). Better load management has the potential to reduce or delay the need for new power plants, which are expensive to build. Because electric cooperatives have the goal of providing electricity at the lowest possible cost, any money they save helps keep your bill affordable.

YOUR ROLE

A modern grid isn't just about improving system reliability and efficiency; it's about providing you with the information and tools you need to make choices about your energy use. Imagine managing your electricity use in a way similar to personal banking—instantly and online. With a modern grid, it will be possible for you to have a clear and timely picture of your energy use without waiting for your monthly electric bill. This will make consumers better informed about when to run heating and cooling systems or use major appliances in the home.

REVOLUTIONIZING THE GRID

Building our current electric grid was one of the greatest engineering feats of the 20th century. Modernizing it by applying new, digital technology could revolutionize the electric system and become one of the greatest accomplishments of the 21st century. A modern grid will benefit everyone by providing tools that allow consumers to become more engaged and service to be more efficient, reliable and affordable—an idea that we can all support.

This is the fourth in a series prepared by the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives. Next month: Why your cooperative is your advocate.

What You Can Do
Learn more about electric grid modernization at www.energync.net.

Safe, comfortable bathing from Jacuzzi®

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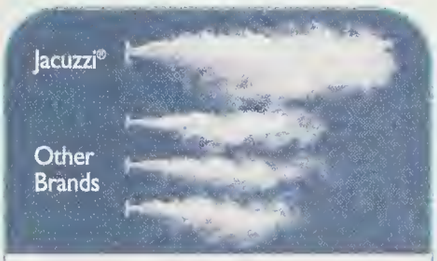
The Jacuzzi® Walk-In tub is luxurious, feature-packed and affordable

There is nothing like the simple pleasure of taking a warm bath. The cares of the day seem to fade away, along with the aches and pains of everyday life. Unfortunately for many aging Americans with mobility issues, slipping into a bath can result in slipping onto the floor. The fear of falling has made the simple act of bathing and its therapeutic benefits a thing of the past... until now. *first*STREET has partnered with Jacuzzi®, the company that perfected hydrotherapy. Together, they've created a walk-in tub that offers more than just safe bathing, peace-of-mind and independence, it can actually help you feel better.

Unlike traditional bathtubs, the Jacuzzi® Walk-In Tub features a leakproof door that allows you to simply step into the tub rather than stepping precariously over the side. It features a state-of-the-art acrylic surface, a raised seat and the controls are within easy reach. No other Walk-In Tub features the patented Jacuzzi® PointPro™ jet system. These high-volume, low-pressure pumps feature a perfectly balanced water to air ratio to massage thoroughly yet gently. Some swirl, some spiral, some deliver large volumes of water and others target specific pressure points. They are all arranged in precise locations designed to deliver a therapeutic massage, yet they are fully adjustable so that your bathing experience can be completely unique.



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Five major considerations to help make an informed decision before buying a Walk-In Tub:

- **Quality** - A walk-in tub is a major investment. You want to find a quality tub that will last for decades. Look for one that's 100% leakproof, mold-resistant, full metal frame construction and one that's American made.
- **Warranty** - Ask for a lifetime "no leak guarantee." The best tubs offer a lifetime warranty on both the tub and the operating system.
- **Pain Relieving Therapy** - Find a tub that has both water and air jet therapy to soak away your aches and pains preferably with a perfectly balanced water to air ratio.
- **Comfort** - Insist on ergonomic design, easy-to-reach controls.
- **Endorsements** - Only consider tubs that are ETL or UL listed. Also look for a tub tested to IAPMO (International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials) standards and that's USPC (Universal Spa Plumbing Code) Certified.

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The return of the

Chestnut

Known as "the grain that grows on a tree," chestnuts are low in fat, gluten-free and now can be grown locally.

Text and photos by Hannah Miller

American chestnuts gave sustenance and income to many a North Carolina mountain family during the first decades of the 20th century. Wildlife feasted on them, hogs were let loose to devour them, and children gathered them both to eat and to export to northern cities during holiday periods.

The mighty trees that bore them fell with a thud, however, victim of a vicious blight that left scarcely a tree by the middle of the century. The nuts disappeared from the public consciousness.

Now a handful of North Carolina orchardists are trying to awaken food fans' interest in a chestnut that, if not the original, retains some of the genes of that king of the forest. It's a Dunstan chestnut, a cross between a healthy American chestnut and a shorter but blight-resistant Chinese chestnut.

The nuts, which grow three to a prickly burr, have such a sweet taste that, when roasted over a charcoal fire, "they almost taste like steak," says orchardist Brad Owen of Clove County Farm in Lexington, a member of EnergyUnited. It's a taste he and the other members of N.C. Chestnut Growers Association, armed with an N.C. Dept. of Agriculture specialty crops grant, have been introducing at farmers markets and specialty grocery stores, and via www.piedmontlocalfood.com, restaurant chefs, and retailers including Chapel Hill-based gift-box purveyor Southern Season.

Golden meat peeps out from chestnuts that pop open during roasting.

Once freed from its burr and the dark brown skin surrounding it, the chestnut is practically an all-purpose food, says Owen. It's high in carbohydrates and much lower in oil than many other nuts, prompting one description of it as "the grain that grows on a tree."

"It's more like a potato than it is a pecan, but with a much more robust flavor," says Richard Teague, who, with 500 trees on his High Rock Farm in Gibsonville (www.high-rock-farm.org), is the largest grower. He grinds some of his nuts into gluten-free flour in his grist mill, and Owen, whose output has grown steadily, hopes to have some of his nuts ground there as well.

Lee Hinkle, proprietor of the old-fashioned Conrad & Hinkle Food Market on Lexington's town square, says he sold nearly all of Owen's 10-pound delivery of nuts in one autumn week—at $5.99 a pound. He expects to sell 10 pounds per week October–December.

He has two kinds of customers for the nuts. The first are the nostalgic ones. "The old-timers that come in here know exactly what to do," he says. "They'll line them up along the hearth (to roast)."

The other category of customer is the health-conscious one, who appreciates the fact that the chestnuts are organically grown, gluten-free and have a low fat content.

Brenda Sutton, the Rockingham County Extension director who as "The Produce Lady" promotes N.C.-grown foods on www.theproducelady.org, is gluten-intolerant and therefore "passionate" about chestnuts, she says. She's featuring a video on using N.C.-grown chestnuts on the website this month.

Charcoal or wood burned in an open fire gives chestnuts a special flavor, says Brad Owen. He uses a pan with holes or a popcorn popper.

Her favorite dish is a chestnut-flour cake recipe from Richard Teague that uses extra eggs to make up for the lack of gluten, ordinarily a binding agent in dough. "It's like German chocolate cake," she says..

Chef Dion Sprenkle at Dion's restaurant in Welcome makes pancake batter with the flour and also fries calamari with it. "It gives it a nice, nutty brown sweet taste to it," he says.

And at Pinocchio's of Spencer, Italian-born chef Guiseppe Lopriore serves shiitake mushrooms over chestnut fettuccine. "People like it because it's kind of salty but, at the same time, it has a sweet taste."

He also boils nuts that Brad Owen brings him, then throws them in the food processor. Voila! It's a custard base, which he puts in an ice cream glass with chocolate, rum and vanilla. On top he puts a garnish, "a little whipping cream and a whole chestnut."

"If you want something different, this is the place," he says.

Hannah Miller is a Carolina Country contributing writer who lives in Charlotte.

To see the recipe for the chestnut cake and more pictures, go to the Carolina Stories section of www.carolinacountry.com

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More Mailboxes, Less Mail

How will the mounting deficit at the Postal Service affect rural mail delivery? *By Marilyn Jones*

E-mail, electronic bill-paying, online advertising—it all has sent the U.S. Postal Service into a financial tailspin.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. It ended its third fiscal quarter (April 1–June 30) with a net loss of $5.2 billion, compared to a net loss of $3.1 billion for the same period last year.

In 2006, the Postal Service processed and delivered 213 billion pieces of mail. In 2011 this total fell to 168 billion.

"Add to the decrease in mail volume the fact we add an average of about 2,300 delivery points to our network every day and you have the perfect storm," said postal spokesman Carl Walton, who is based in Greensboro. "We're delivering less mail to more addresses."

So what does this mean to rural customers?

The postal presence

One of the proposals the Postal Service has on the table to help its cash-strapped business is five-day delivery.

"The Postal Service believes five-day delivery will reduce our operating costs significantly," Walton said. "We've heard from our customers. They have already responded in various surveys that it's acceptable to them as long as it allows us to keep the Postal Service—and universal service nationwide—in business. We're just waiting on our legislators now.

"Plus, even with five-day delivery, post offices would remain open six days a week," he added. "The Postal Service predicts five-day delivery will save it $3.1 billion a year."

The Postal Service also is moving forward with a plan to keep rural post offices across the nation open by reducing operating hours based on customer use. Known as Post Plan, the process will be phased in over the next two years to be completed in September 2014.

Walton said that most Americans have said that "they don't want the Postal Service to take away their post offices. This way, even with reduced hours, there will be a post office in every community."

Projected annual savings, once the plan is implemented, is $500 million. In North Carolina there are 234 small post offices on the Post Plan list—from Albertson to Zionville—where operating hours would be cut to six, four or two hours per day. It is a preliminary list that is subject to change.

"This will preserve rural post offices while being a part of the framework to save the Postal Service money," said Walton. "This is all part of the plan to return the organization to financial stability. Access to the retail lobby and to PO boxes will remain unchanged, and the town's ZIP code and community identity will be retained."

Village Post Office

Another option is known as Village Post Offices. VPOs are located within existing businesses—convenience stores and other local establishments—and are managed by the proprietors. Located inside places residents already frequent, VPOs can save postal customers time and could operate at longer hours than regular post offices while offering the usual services of mail boxes, stamps and other products. Some 70,000 alternate access locations already are seen at such places as Wal-Mart, Staples, Office Depot, Walgreens, Sam's Club and Costco.

In addition to maintaining more than 31,000 post offices, the Postal Service also provides online access to products and services through www.usps.com.

"Meeting the needs of postal customers is, and will always be, a top priority. We continue to balance that by better aligning service options with customer demands and reducing the cost to serve," said Postmaster General and CEO Patrick R. Donahoe. "With that said, we've listened to our customers in rural America and we've heard them loud and clear—they want to keep their post office open."

Marilyn Jones is a freelance writer with an expertise in Postal Service issues.

Is your post office on the Plan?

See if your post office is on the list of offices where hours could be cut back between now and September 2014. It's on our website www.carolinacountry.com

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Life Would Never Be the Same

By Knolan Benfield

It was 1949, I was 9 years old and we were on a family vacation in Miami Beach. Mom, Dad, my sister and I were sitting on the porch of the Penguin Hotel enjoying the soft tropical breeze of the summer evening.

Some movement in the lobby caught my eye. It looked like a small movie screen. I asked my Dad if I could peep in the lobby.

Several overstuffed businessmen sitting in overstuffed chairs were looking at television. "Victory At Sea" was on. The powerful music, the roll of the warships at sea, the boom of the battleship's guns… it was thrilling. This was the first television set I'd ever seen! I ran back to get my family to come watch it.

Television was about all I talked about for the rest of the summer. I never considered the possibility of having one of our own. Once in a while, we would go over to the Hordes' house in the evening and watch "The Lone Ranger" on their television, eat popcorn and drink Pepsi Cola. The Hordes were members of the church my father pastored. And Mrs. Horde was my third grade teacher.

That autumn, Dad gathered our family in our living room. He and Mother had decided it was time we got a television. He said it would be delivered that day.

That afternoon a man climbed up on our roof and clamped a television antenna to the chimney. It was Mr. Horde. He was the only man who sold and installed television sets in my hometown. To us, he was the TV Man in more ways than one. I watched every move he made on our roof. It was a Saturday. I remember because the man on the roof was my teacher's husband. Having your third grade teacher's husband install your television is not something you forget.

Mr. Horde had hooked up that flat antenna wire and dropped one end to the ground. As he climbed down I asked him, "How long will it be before we can watch TV?"

"Oh, not for several days," he said. "It takes time to hook one of these things up."

I was devastated. I knew that my hero-of-heroes, The Lone Ranger, would thunder onto the television screen at 7 o'clock that evening. Mr. Horde must have seen my disappointment because he said he was kidding, and we would be able to look at it in just a few minutes.

He showed my dad something about vertical and horizontal hold, and then our round, 12-inch Zenith television in a big double-door cabinet with a record player and an AM/FM radio was ready! Our family gathered and stared mesmerized at a still picture of an Indian with full war bonnet and little lines and drawings all around him. It didn't take long to grow tired of the audible tone that accompanied the Indian. We turned it down a little, but not off—had to be sure it stayed working. All the adults (Mother, Dad and Nana) wandered away to do whatever adults did on Saturday afternoons in those days, but sister and I kept watch over the Indian.

"Is anything on yet?" one of them would call from another room. At times they'd stick their heads in the room to see for themselves.

A cloud of dust rose from the trail and The Lone Ranger himself rode out of the pages of yesteryear on his mighty steed Silver and thundered into our own living room.

Where's the orchestra?

After awhile Dad said, "Better turn it up a little so we can hear when that tone stops. They usually start the shows right after that."

Eventually the tone stopped, the Indian disappeared and we yelled, "It's coming on! It's coming on!" Everyone rushed back. For several seconds the screen stayed blank. No sound came from the speaker. Was something wrong with our new TV set?

Then a man's mellow voice welcomed us to WBT-TV, Channel 3 in Charlotte—the first television station in the state. A photograph of the station appeared on the screen and stayed on without any sound for what seemed a long time.

Finally a trumpet sounded, a cloud of dust rose from the trail and The Lone Ranger himself rode out of the

pages of yesteryear on his mighty steed Silver and thundered into our own living room. The thrill of knowing we would always be able to watch The Lone Ranger and his faithful friend Tonto every Saturday evening was overwhelming. Life would never be the same.

But I remember asking, "Where's the orchestra?"

My father laughed and said, "You don't see them. They're behind the scene out of the way so we can see the show."

I was disappointed. I'd thought you'd be able to see the orchestra, especially the trumpet player. After all, I'd listen to that man play "The William Tell Overture" on his trumpet on the radio at 5:30 Monday, Wednesday and Friday my entire life. It only seemed right, now that we had a television set, that we should be able to see him as he played. That trumpet had called a generation of us to the radio as the announcer said, "A fiery horse with a speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty 'Hi-yo Silver'—The Lone Ranger rides again!"

Any concern I had about the trumpet player was soon swept away. The show was better than my 9-year-old imagination had dreamed. It was as if we were right there with the masked rider of the plains dodging bullets and fighting for law and order in the early West. What a thrill it was! And we could ride again every Saturday night for the rest of time. Who even noticed that the program was in black and white? Who cared?

After the show, someone mentioned what was coming on next. I'd been so excited about "The Lone Ranger" I'd forgotten there were other shows.

We'd settle in for an evening of television together with our Pepsis and popcorn. Mother always fixed popcorn. We kids sat on the floor. Everybody was excited. This was something new.

After we got our own set I don't think we went back to the Hordes' to watch TV anymore, and I missed that. However, we began to have friends over to watch television with our family, and that was fun.

"The Red Skelton Show" kept us in stitches on Tuesday evenings at 8. And there was "The Gary Moore Show." Gary would beg for a sponsor. He introduced us to Carol Burnett.

"I Remember Mama" was a heart-warming program, but *my* Mama just couldn't watch it. She said, "That mother on the show is so perfect it makes me feel inadequate." She was as good a mother as the fictional one—and we told her so—but she still wouldn't watch it.

I still miss those old variety programs like "The Ed Sullivan Show" with the June Taylor dancers and the acrobats.

Ah yes, Arthur Godfrey and his ukulele. "How are ya, how are ya, how are ya." He'd talk a lot about flying airplanes and going to Hawaii.

The early day of television was a family time. Family and friends would gather and watch the modern miracle together. There was only one channel, and it didn't come on until about 5:15 in the afternoon. I don't know what time it went off. By that time I was in bed dreaming of riding the range with my pals Tonto and Kemosabe. "Hi-yo, Silver. Away!"

Writer and photographer Knolan Benfield grew up in the Blue Ridge Mountains and lives in Morganton. He is a member of Rutherford EMC. Learn more at KnolanBenfieldPhotography.com

Right: *I was Kemosabe to my dog Prince.*

Below: *My dad was a pastor. He knew when it was time for us to have our own TV set.*

Below: *Inspired by my hero-of-heroes, The Lone Ranger.*

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A TV system doesn't take a holiday

By Brian Sloboda

Holidays can be draining and costly: dinner at the in-laws; parties at work and school; buying, wrapping, unwrapping, and cleaning up. And although it's nice to fire up the big-screen TV in the evening and watch a holiday classic, note that when you go to bed your TV and home entertainment system doesn't really take a rest.

Your television uses energy even when turned off. Save up to 8 percent of your monthly electricity consumption by taking a closer look at these "energy vampires."

Many of these devices, as well as your computer equipment, use energy even when turned off—for example, your HDTV could be remembering the last channel you viewed or the language you speak, or trying to turn on faster. This power draw is commonly called "phantom" or "vampire" load. According to Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the average home attributes 8 percent of its monthly electricity consumption to these energy vampires, because they are on 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Fortunately, TVs and DVD players often have power saving settings in the setup menu. Although altering the factory settings usually means the unit will take a few more seconds to start, it's worth taking a look if you want to trim your electric bill.

Regular power strips and "smart" power strips can help cut down on "phantom power" draws from many electronics.

If there's no power saving option, you can slay that energy vampire by using a smart power strip. This technology allows you to plug devices into a specially marked section of the strip to keep power flowing to them while letting you turn off other items. This way, you can shut off your stereo, DVD player, or audio system without losing the ability to record programs to a DVR or VCR or having to reprogram the TV every time you want to watch a show. There are also advanced power strips that contain surge protection and turn on and off ancillary home theater equipement automatically. The power strip's electronics sense power load on the TV outlet, thus requiring no manual shutting off of these vampire loads.

Of course, there's always a catch. If you unplug your television or cable/satellite receiver box, it usually has to run its initial setup program when switched back on. Depending on the model, it could take up to 20 minutes for channels to be recognized, and you may have to reset preferences. Most of us aren't willing to do that every day.

The bottom line is that your TV system doesn't have to drain your budget, over the holidays or otherwise. In fact, the money you save by eliminating the energy vampires in your home may even be enough to go out to a movie.

Brian Sloboda is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Learning in Mexico

North Carolina health professionals visit Mexico to help address Latino health issues here

Did you know that 22 percent of babies born in Durham County are Latino? North Carolina has one of the fastest growing Latino immigrant populations of any state in the nation and most are from Mexico. Health care leaders across the state have turned to the Center for International Understanding (CIU) in Raleigh to learn about changing demographics and for help identifying practical solutions to strengthening health delivery in North Carolina for everyone.

Stephanie Carroll Carson

"The more we understand their culture and how they link to services in their home country, the better we will be able to provide that here in the United States."

—Nurse Practitioner Martha Brinsko

Health leaders from four counties—Durham, Mecklenburg, Wake and Orange—in October joined CIU's Latino Initiative Study Program and visited Puebla and Mexico City. It was CIU's fifth Latino Initiative delegation focused specifically on health issues and improving health outcomes among the Latino population in North Carolina.

In Wake County during the spring 2011 tornadoes, said Sue Lynn Ledford, director of the Wake County Health Department, her agency struggled with finding ways to communicate health concerns to Hispanics affected by the natural disaster. "Probably the bigger gaps were understanding the culture and what would be acceptable and normal in their situation," she said.

Ledford was among those who made the Oct. 8–14 trip. So did Martha Brinsko, the adult nurse practitioner for the Charlotte Community Health Clinic, where 60 percent of the patients are Hispanic. She and a team of others from Mecklenburg County are working on a Web portal for community information specifically geared to the Spanish-speaking population. She went to Mexico to look for guidance on how their website should be developed and distributed.

"Being able to link them to community services has been a real challenge," Brinsko said. "The more we understand their culture and how they link to services in their home country, the better we will be able to provide that here in the United States."

Since 1998, more than 700 people in North Carolina have taken part in CIU's Latino Initiatives. Alumni have enacted changes, such as creating mobile health clinics for Latino communities and a Latino community center.

Delegations focus on key policy issues impacting North Carolina, from education and economic development to law enforcement and health care.

All groups examine the push-pull of immigration and have the opportunity to meet with colleagues in their field in Mexico as well as Mexican families who have relatives currently working in North Carolina.

No state funding pays for the travel portion of CIU's initiatives. Participants in the Latino initiative 2012 program received support from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, Capitol Broadcasting Company, Presbyterian Healthcare Foundation, the Redwoods Group, Taku Fund of Triangle Community Foundation, and Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

The CIU promotes awareness, expands understanding and empowers action through global education. Its programs for business, policy and education leaders aim to make North Carolina the most globally engaged state in the nation. Founded in 1979, CIU is part of the University of North Carolina system. Learn more at www.ciu.northcarolina.edu.

—Stephanie Carroll Carson, North Carolina News Service

Gifts of efficiency

Energy-smart presents give all year long

By Kelly Trapnell

If you are wondering what to buy for your loved ones this holiday season, consider giving the gift of efficiency.

Green giving is thoughtful on many levels. It's good for the environment, and the person receiving the gift has a new gadget to use that will keep his or her long-term electric costs lower year-round. It's a gift everyone can feel good about.

"Choosing a green gift can be easy," says Brian Sloboda, senior program manager for the Cooperative Research Network (CRN). "Be aware of energy use. Look for any mention of energy ratings on large appliances and televisions, or select unplugged gifts. Think solar, reusable, and recyclable. Even something as small as the packaging and wrapping can make a difference."

Look for items with lightweight packaging. And think about wrapping your gift in something like a fabric bag that can be reused or even an accessory like a scarf to tie things up.

Green gift ideas

- **FOR DECORATORS: LED Christmas lights ($15–$35).** These energy-efficient lights are becoming easier to find. They save on holiday electric bills and stay cool to the touch. For a festive complete package, wrap in a decorative stocking.
- **FOR GARDENERS: Solar garden lights ($15–$50).** Available in many colors, styles and sizes, solar garden lights can be a lovely addition to your favorite green thumb's garden. To up the green quotient, wrap them in a burlap bag.
- **FOR COOKS: Toaster oven ($60–$140).** Especially great for the empty nester or those only cooking for one or two, toaster ovens are a good choice to save energy as an alternative to heating a large standard oven.

Think green when wrapping gifts by using reusable or recyclable wrap like a newspaper sports page and twine.

Energy-smart gifts can give all year long.

- **FOR MOVIE BUFFS OR SPORTS FANS: Energy Star-rated TV (price based on size).** Televisions are getting bigger and better. But before you give something that uses as much electricity as a refrigerator as some TVs do, look for the Energy Star label. It will offer the smallest impact on electric bills as possible.

For techies

- **Smart strip ($20–$40).** This new cutting-edge technology is great for plugging in electronic gadgets. Not your average power strip, smart strips sport designated outlets that make it easy to power down certain devices to save energy while not affecting others plugged into the same strip.
- **Solar cell phone charger ($55–$100+).** You can unplug energy-sucking chargers from the wall. Solar chargers can be placed in a window, in the car or anywhere the sun shines to charge a cell phone or other devices like a GPS unit or MP3 player.

Kelly Trapnell writes on writes on safety and energy efficiency issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Cook once but eat thrice

Get the most out of holiday ham

Once the holiday feast is over, many home cooks are left with leftovers and the challenge to make the most of what remains. Fortunately, there's a lot more that you can do with leftovers than just reheating them.

For example, take that ham you cooked and served on Christmas Day. You can turn it into a potato-crusted ham quiche for a next-day brunch or a savory soup for dinner. You'll leave friends and family asking for leftovers more often.

Easy Corn-Ham Chowder (microwave)

- 2 cups cooked ham, cubed
- 1¼ cups milk (or 1 cup milk and ¼ cup cream)
- 1 can (17 ounces) creamed-style corn
- 1 can (10¾ ounces) cream of celery soup
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Pour in to a 2-quart casserole dish and microwave on high for 7 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes. Garnish if desired.

Yield: 4 servings

Potato-Crusted Ham Quiche

- 2 cups of potatoes, raw and shredded
- ¼ cup onion, minced
- ½ cup red bell pepper, finely diced
- 1 tablespoon chives, finely chopped
- 3 eggs, divided
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¾ cup sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- ¾ cup smoked Gouda cheese, grated
- 1 cup ham, fully cooked and chopped
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon salt (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Spray quiche pan with non-stick cooking spray.

In medium bowl mix potatoes, onion, pepper, chives, 1 beaten egg and salt and pepper to taste. Press potato mixture evenly into crust shape up the side and on the bottom of the pan and spray again. Bake for 15 minutes or until lightly browned on edges.

In a mixing bowl, combine cheeses. Remove crust from oven and layer the following: ham first, and then cheese mixture on top. In a bowl, beat together evaporated milk, remaining eggs, paprika, salt and pepper. Pour mixture on top of cheese and return to oven.

Bake about 25 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into middle of pie comes out clean. Allow to cool five minutes.

Yield: 8 servings

Sources: Family Features.com and the North Carolina Pork Council, based in Raleigh.

More tasty ideas

Other ideas for leftover ham include adding it to your scrambled eggs and omelets, macaroni and cheese and bowtie pasta with cheese and peas. You can also freeze ham, technically up to six months, depending on the type of ham, but two months maximum is generally recommended for best flavor.

For more ham recipes visit the N.C. Pork Council's website at www.ncpork.org, which also provides nutritional information about pork and good barbecuing tips. Other websites to glean ideas include www.smithfield.com and www.facebook.com/CookingwithSmithfield. You can also follow @allaboutpork on Twitter for timely recipes and tips.

WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS?

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by Dec. 6 with your name, address and the name of your electric cooperative.

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Multiple entries from the same person will be disqualified.

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our January issue, will receive $25. To see the answer before you get your January magazine, go to "Where Is This?" on our website www.carolinacountry.com.

November winner

The November picture by Karen Olson House showed a produce stand set up this past summer in Lewiston-Woodville, Bertie County. Local growers offered products here near the town hall, fire station and Sunoco station. In 1981, Lewiston (formerly Turner's Crossroads) merged with Woodville (formerly Hotel) and was incorporated as Lewiston-Woodville. The winning entry, chosen at random from all correct submissions, was from Francie Sessoms of Aulander, a member of Roanoke Electric Cooperative.

Holiday gift guide

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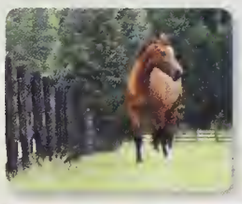

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I Remember...

Dad made the cradle for my Christmas doll.

We felt rich

Back in the 1940s it was especially hard to provide for a family of seven children. But at Christmastime we always managed to receive one gift each. When I was 3, I was fortunate enough to get a doll. My dad made the cradle and, needless to say, it made my Christmas.

Even though my family had very little financially, we were blessed in so many other ways. We all enjoyed a warm house, plenty to eat, good health and an abundance of love. We actually felt rich in many ways.

All of my family has now passed away. Even though I can't physically share Christmas with them, I always share my thoughts and memories and thank God for his abundant love in allowing me to have such a wonderful Christmas and childhood.

Ruth Watson, Mount Airy, Surry-Yadkin EMC

My little red scooter

As a child, like most children I was given a favorite toy at Christmas time. I was 6 years old when Santa brought me a little red scooter. I loved that scooter more than any doll or other gift I was given. Living out in the country, my parents let me ride my scooter through the house from room to room.

One weekend I took my red scooter with me to visit my grandmother in Wilmington. She had a sidewalk in front of her house. That was wonderful, giving me a longer ride, not having to dodge furniture and door frames as I did at home.

For whatever reason when I returned home, I left my scooter at my grandmother's. When I returned a week later, after hugs and kisses, the first thing I did was go to look for my scooter. It was nowhere to be found. I was so upset. My grandmother said she gave it away because she was afraid I would run out into the street and be hit by a passing car. I was upset with her and the loss I felt.

I could not wait for my children to have a little red scooter so I could ride it, too. But it was not the same. Now, at 70, I get the giggles. I know it is not funny, but what if my doctor had to call my son saying, "Your mother fell and broke her hip while she was riding a red scooter."

Elizabeth Lee, Delco, Brunswick EMC

A red wooden case of Cokes

One of my favorite childhood memories is of my grandfather, Papa, at Christmas. Papa was a tall, quiet man. He usually wore Pointer overalls with a button-up-the-front shirt and a long-john shirt underneath, even in the summer. I can see him now on that Christmas, quietly stepping up onto the back porch as Grandmama yells at the top of her lungs "Merry Christmas!" In his big, work-weathered hands was a bright red wooden crate full of glass-bottle Cokes. This particular Christmas was so cold that he left them on the back porch and they stayed cold. I remember my little sister drinking so many that she got a kidney infection. To this day, I still love a Coca-Cola.

Last Christmas Eve, in walked my tall, handsome husband with a bright red wooden crate full of glass-bottle Cokes. All I could do was laugh and cry, both at the same time. He began to explain the gift, but I knew immediately. No explanation needed. I couldn't wait to call my sister.

Wanda Garren, Lincolnton, Rutherford EMC

Aunt Annie's young'uns

They were a family of six children, our cousins, and their mother living alone. We were not rich, but we were blessed more than they. I remember my Daddy saying, "Better go check on Annie and the young'uns. They may need food about now." And every time, the six cousins and Aunt Annie came to stay with us for a few days.

Daddy was a great farmer and provided for us well. Mama really knew how to save vegetables by canning on the old woodstove. We always had plenty to eat. As cousins we entertained ourselves, such as when mama hung a sheet up and put a light behind it so we could make movies. Or we would play on the big porch. When Saturday came, I'd tell Bible stories. If they listened well, I'd give them candy. (Now I am married to a preacher.)

My sister and I always enjoyed having our cousins to play with. These three cousins are now dead along with my father, mother and Aunt Annie. But I can still hear my Daddy say, "Better go check on Annie and the young'uns. They may need food about now."

Melvie Wallace, Monroe, Union Power

They were among the six cousins who would come stay with us.

Happy trails

As an 8-year-old cotton mill boy, there wasn't much you could do for entertainment. Possibly a game of marbles, make a pair of stilts, find an old tire to push around or put two tin cans together for a telephone.

But then came Saturday morning. It's Kiddie Show Day at the theater. Wow! Roy Rogers, Gabby Hayes and the Sons of the Pioneers including — yes — a series with Lash La Rue. A group of us would always go for the show.

We could ride the city buses that went to and from West Hickory that cost us 10 cents each. We would wait at the rock corner and then the bus would take us to the bus station downtown about two blocks from the theater. We would walk the last little bit to the show. We waited patiently in line at the window for a ticket which cost 9 cents. I would give them my dime allowance and get my penny change back. Once inside, I had enough money to get a candy bar and drink. That was my allowance for another week.

After watching the show for two hours, I would make my way back over to the bus station for the trip home. If both buses had already left for West Hickory, don't worry. I knew the way home. I headed up to the railroad tracks nearby and started walking west toward the sunset, thinking there will be another Kiddie Show next week. The good guys wearing the white hats always won and the bad guys always lost. Looking and walking westward I would start humming, "Happy Trails to You!"

Jerry Curtis Moore, Hickory, Blue Ridge Electric

Sharon Stroud's letters

As a Marine serving in Vietnam in July 1969, I was barely 18 and feeling scared and all alone. One day to my surprise came a letter from a young girl in North Carolina named Sharon Stroud. Sharon said she had picked me out of a list from either a magazine or a military newspaper of some sort, because we had the same last name. Sharon's letters lifted my spirits. They seemed to come just at the right time with exactly the message I needed to hear.

When I returned to the states in July 1970, my sea bag was stolen along with Sharon's address and letters and other personal belongings. I did have a little bag that contained this picture of Sharon at Christmas 1969. I was never able to say thank you, so maybe she will see this. If anyone knows of her, let her know that I would like to say thank you.

Jim Stroud, Pilot Mountain, Surry-Yadkin EMC

I never got to thank her for lifting my spirits in Vietnam.

My uncle's doctor's appointment

When going to the doctor, I always try to get my appointments to be first one in the morning or the last one in the day, believing I probably won't have to wait as long.

Well, a few years ago, I had an uncle who had the last doctor's appointment in the day. The nurse led him into the examining room and he lay down on the table. She checked his blood pressure and pulse. Leaving the room, she said, "The doctor will be in to see you in a few minutes."

Well, he fell asleep waiting for the doctor. They closed up the office and they all went home, forgetting about my uncle. Sometime after dark, the cleaning lady came in to do some cleaning. She opened the door, flipped on the light, and it scared her so bad she screamed out and, of course, woke him up. He replied, "Lady, I'm all right if you are."

The next day they tried to charge him for not keeping his doctor's appointment.

Louis Talmadge Meads, Elizabeth City, Albemarle EMC

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By L.A. Jackson

Poinsettia pointers

Poinsettias are Christmas. These are the popular plants that always brighten up homes with Yuletide cheer. Knowing how to properly choose and care for them is important to extending their pretty displays through the Christmas season and even beyond. So, here are some helpful pointers to keep in mind:

- When picking a poinsettia, the plant should, of course, look pretty, but it should also be upright with stiff limbs. Also, healthy foliage will usually be deep green, not light green. The "flowers" (actually bracts) are normally brightly colored and fairly flat.
- If you buy a large poinsettia, and it comes in a light plastic container, consider moving it to a clay pot for better stability.
- Remove any holiday wrapping from the pot. Such packaging will act as a water trap and turn the container into a small swamp.
- At home, let the light shine on your poinsettia! Either treat it to at least six hours of sunlight a day, such as can be provided by a south-facing window, or constant exposure to bright indoor lights.
- You would think these natives from Central America would love heat, but not so. Generally, a room that has daytime temperatures of about 70 degrees and hangs around the 60 to 65 degree mark at night is ideal. Also, no drafts. Poinsettias won't do well in stray breezes, hot or cold.
- Water when the soil's surface is just dry to the touch. Watering every three to four days will usually do the trick. For best results, use only tap water that has been allowed to warm to room temperature.
- If you want your poinsettia to still be growing and showing off after Christmas, a light fertilizing once a month using a diluted mix of water and soluble houseplant fertilizer will take care of the nutrient requirements.

Garden To Do's

December

- A good substitute for lime is wood ash, so after the ashes of a wood fire have grown cold, sprinkle a light application on garden beds that have high acidic concentrations (low pH).
- When your Christmas cactus comes into flower, keep it in bright light but reduce watering to prolong its bloom period.
- Now is a good time to take hardwood cuttings of such deciduous woodies as forsythia, Japanese quince, mock orange, spirea and viburnum.
- Consider adding accents that last year-round in the garden. Vases, statuary, fences, benches, walls, water fountains—these are constants that can help keep the garden interesting even in winter.

Tip of the Month

Winter and spring-flowering camellias (Camellia japonica) will begin showing off soon, but after they bloom, there is a job to do. Be sure to rake up and dispose of any spent flowers that have fallen underneath the bush to help prevent camellia petal blight, a fungal disease that can dot pristine blossoms with brown spots, giving them a serious case of the uglies.

January

- If squirrels are invading your bulb beds, spread chicken wire as a barrier over the ground and secure (as well as hide) it with an inch or two of mulch.
- The vegetable garden doesn't have to be a barren place in the winter, as this month is a good time to plant asparagus, onions (seeds) and sugar snap peas.
- Got milk? Start saving gallon containers for use in the early spring garden. By cutting the bottoms out, they make great hot caps for tender, new plants.
- Got toilet paper? Save the cardboard tubes for use this spring as cutworm collars around susceptible young plants.
- Dry indoor heat can be tough on houseplants, so provide humidity by occasionally misting the leaves and placing the pots on trays of moistened pebbles.

L.A. Jackson is the former editor of Carolina Gardener Magazine. If you would like to ask him a question about your garden, contact L.A. at: lajackson1@gmail.com.

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Getting To Know...
Donna Fargo

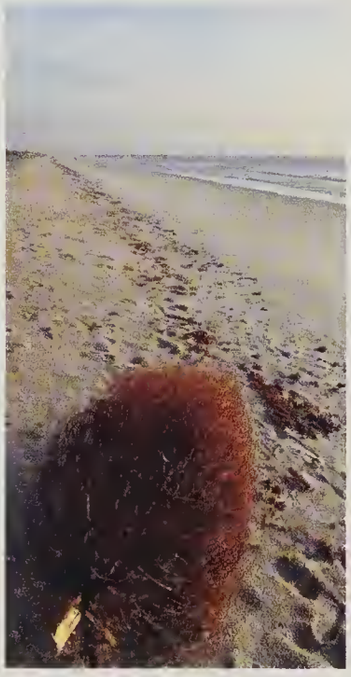
Known For: American country music singer-songwriter and author

About: Born Yvonne Vaughan in 1945, this Mount Airy native attended High Point College and then headed west. After graduating from the University of Southern California she taught at a California high school, eventually heading its English department. While teaching days, she performed nights in clubs. She penned her breakthrough song, "The Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A," which soared to No. 1 on the Billboard Country Music Chart and to No. 11 on the Billboard Pop Chart. Her follow-up single "Funny Face" also peaked at No. 1 and became an even bigger pop hit. Donna then placed more than a dozen singles, most of which she wrote, in the Country Top Ten. She became ill and was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1978, but with her husband's help and her faith, grew better. She resumed a slower singing schedule but still enjoyed less dramatic musical successes through the 1980s. The North Carolina Music Hall of Famer's awards include a Grammy, a Country Music Association award, and five Academy of Country Music awards. She's also written several inspirational books, the most recent published in 2010. She has a line of greeting cards and a stretch of highway named after her in Mount Airy.

Quote: "Too often people try to change the big world without trying to change their small world first."

Scotty Display

Fans can view a few of country singer Scotty McCreery's personal possessions in a new display case at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh. The case features the black leather jacket, jeans, T-shirt and cross necklace that McCreery wore during his final duet on "American Idol," the lyrics sheet for the song "Live Like You Were Dying," a gold record and his mother's backstage pass. Born in Garner, McCreery was the youngest male contestant to win "American Idol." Now a student at North Carolina State University, he continues to perform. The display is up through Jan. 4, 2013. Museum information: 919-807-7900 or www.ncmuseumofhistory.org or Facebook.



A Christmas tree that keeps on givin'

Looking for ways to recycle your tree after the holidays? Christmas trees can be reground for mulch and wood chips—check with your local waste service to see if it recycles trees. Christmas trees make great fish habitats—they can be dropped into a lake or pond to attract and shelter fish. Christmas trees are also used along our coast to prevent erosion. For example, donated trees at Fort Macon State Park collect sand and help replace dunes washed away by foot traffic and storms. Or if you have room on your property, your old tree can serve as a mini-sanctuary for birds. Redecorate it with pine cones smeared with peanut butter and bird seed to soon see new life in your old tree!

Q. What is the fear of Santa Claus called?

A. Claustraphobia!

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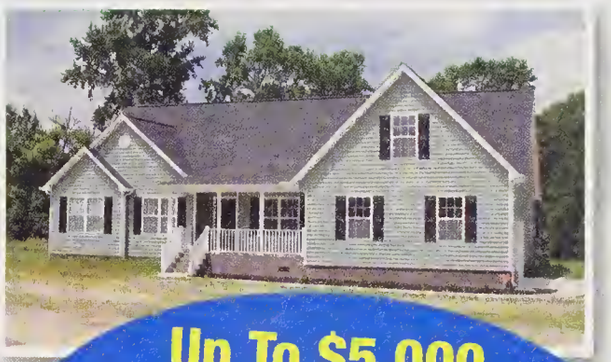

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EXAMPLE:
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First published in 1876, this is now an eBook.

185 x 2 = _ _ _
SYE x W = _ _ _

71428 x 2 = _ _ _ _ _ _
OSAWY x W = _ _ _ _ _ _

WORD
DRAW-WRAP-PRAY
PLAY

H O R S E

_ _ _ _

_ _ _ _

_ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _

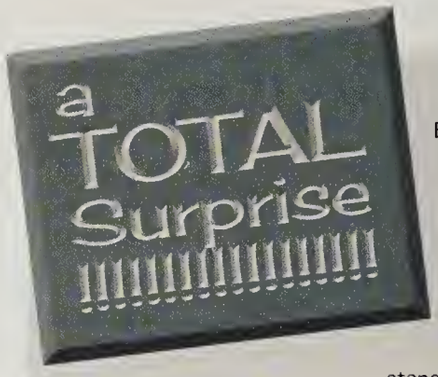
W A G O N

To go from HORSE to WAGON you must drop, change or add a letter in each step to spell a new word. You can rearrange letters in any step. Your answer may be different from mine.

When the family dog died a mother felt the time had come to explain the facts of death to her five-year-old daughter. Drawing the child close she whispered, "We can all be happy now that Frisky is up in heaven with God."

Her daughter looked at her without emotion and asked, "Mom! What's God going to do with a dead dog?'"

Erma Bombeck, in "All I Know About Animal Behavior I Learned in Loehmann's Dressing Room"



Each letter in each of the TOTALS below stands for a digit. Each of the four Ts stands for 1. But the other letters all stand for different digits. That is to say that the digits that stand for the Ls in one TOTAL stand for the As in the other. And each O stands for a different digit. The sum of the digits in one TOTAL is one less than the sum of the digits in the other TOTAL. The equation, $(TO)^2$=TAL is true for both digits.

In the first TOTAL, O+A=L and OxO=L. In the second TOTAL, T+O+T=L and O+L=T+A. Given this infomation, can you find the values of both totals?

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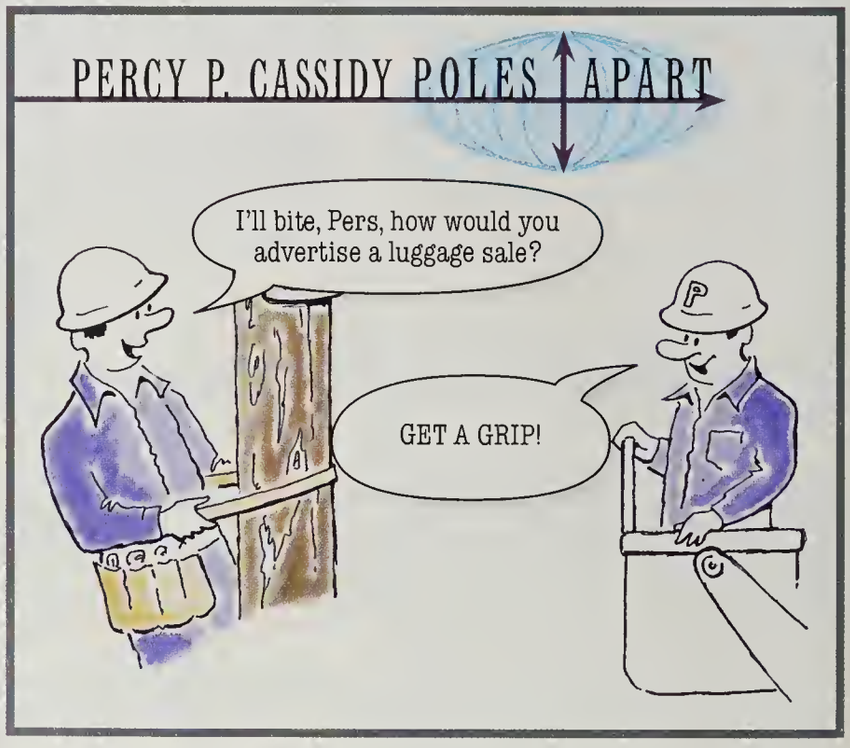
T	O	T	A	L

1		1		
T	O	T	A	L



For answers, please see page 41

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An Old Fashioned Christmas in Whynot

Photography by Ashley Fetner

Fair Grove Methodist Church is located in the Whynot community of southern Randolph County. Organized around 1859, it was known as Mt. Moriah Church. The log church was constructed near the site of the historic Plank Road and was burned during the Civil War. In 1870 a new church was constructed and named Fair Grove because of its location in a grove of oak trees. Construction began on the present church building in 1900 and was completed in 1902. Fair Grove served the Whynot community until it was closed by the Methodist Conference in 1935.

The volunteer Why Not Memorial Association, organized in 1936, continues to maintain and preserve the church and grounds.

On a very cold evening in December, we attended the Old Fashioned Christmas service here. The church is without a heating system but the spirit of those in attendance, mingled with the aroma of ginger cookies and hot cider, ushered in warmth that even central heat could not provide. After an opening prayer, we sang "O Come All Ye Faithful." The Strings of Pearls, The Pioneers and a choir of area singers offered music. We closed singing "Go Tell It On The Mountain."

The special Christmas service is held here the first Sunday night in December and is open to the public.

—Kay Fetner

Kay and Ashley Fetner live in Asheboro and are members of Randolph EMC. Visit www.ashleyfetnerportraits.com

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Christmas Craft Fair
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www.sparta-NC.com

Christmas With Santa
Dec. 1, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

Christmas Is For Kids
Dec. 1, Valdese
(828) 874-2327

Holiday Tour Of Homes
Dec. 1–2, Statesville
(704) 437-1187
www.preservationstatesville.org

Ashe County Choral Society
Dec. 2, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

Christmas By Lamplight
Horne Creek Farm
Dec. 4 & 6, Pinnacle
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Living History Program
Fort Dobbs
Dec. 8, Statesville
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Yule Log Parade
Dec. 14, McAdenville
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"Christmas On The Mountain"
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Dec. 22, Asheville
(828-253-8304
www.ncculture.com

It's A Wonderful Life
Live radio performance
Dec. 23, Hayesville
(828) 389-2787
www.peacockplayhouse.org

ONGOING

Street Dance
Monday nights, Hendersonville
(828) 693-9708
www.historichendersonville.org

Historic Carson House Guided Tours
Wednesday–Saturdays
(828) 724-4948
www.historiccarsonhouse.com

Bluegrass Music Jam
Thursdays, Marion
(828) 652-2215

Moravian Mountain Christmas
Through Dec. 2, Laurel Springs
(336) 359-2951
www.laurelridge.org

A Christmas Story
Comedy classic
Through Dec. 16, Hickory
(828) 327-3855
www.hickorytheatre.org

Blue Ridge Artisans Show & Sale
Through Dec. 24, Marion
(828) 652-8610

Christmas Town USA
Through Dec. 26, McAdenville
(704) 825-4044
www.mcadenville-christmastown.com

Experience 250 years of Christmas holiday traditions with the sights, sounds and scents at Tryon Palace (except for Dec. 24–26) in New Bern. This restored historic site offers seasonal programs, music and crafts, plus evening candlelight tours Dec. 8 and 15. Historic houses and the N.C. History Center feature 18th- to 20th-century decorations. Call (800) 767-1560 or visit www.tryonpalace.org.

Music At The Mills
Through Dec. 28, Union Mills
(828) 287-6113

Tree Fest & Miniatures
Through Dec. 28, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

Festival Of Trees
Through Dec. 30, Sparta
(336) 372-5473

Holiday Lights At The Garden
Through Dec. 31, Belmont
(704) 825-4044
www.dsbg.org

Santa Paws At The Santa House
Pet photos fundraiser
Dec. 2–16, Forest City
(828) 247-4430
www.forestcityevents.com

Santa On The Chimney!
Dec. 8–15, Chimney Rock
(800) 277-9611
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Alleghany Jubilee
Tues. & Sat. nights
Through Dec. 28, 2013
Sparta
(336) 372-4591
http://alleghanyjubilee.com

Piedmont (between I-77 & I-95)

Breakfast With Santa
Dec. 1, Hope Mills
(910) 424-4500

Welcome To December
Christmas concert
Dec. 1, Lexington
(336) 956-8814
www.lexingtonchoralsociety.org

Hope Mills Christmas Parade
Dec. 1, Fayetteville
(910) 424-4500

Tribute To Kings Of Rock & Roll, Pop & Soul
Dec. 1, Fayetteville
(910) 438-4100
www.atthecrown.com

Holiday Shoppe Craft Show
Dec. 1, Chapel Hill
(919) 929-1546
www.stmhsa.org/events

Festival Of Lights
Dec. 1, Hope Mills
(910) 426-4109
www.visitfayettevillenc.com

Christmas Tea And Craft
Dec. 1, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Listing

Deadlines:
For Feb.: Dec. 25
For March: Jan. 25

Submit Listings Online:
Visit www.carolinacountry.com and click "Carolina Adventures" to add your event to the magazine and/or our website. Or e-mail events@carolinacountry.com.

Holiday Sale
Dec. 1, Wake Forest
(919) 671-9269
www.wakeforestfarmersmarket.org

Christmas For The Birds
Create handmade pinecone feeder
Dec. 1, Mount Gilead
(910) 439-6802
www.ncculture.com

A Golden Christmas
Reed Gold Mine
Dec. 1, Midland
(704) 721-4653
www.ncculture.com

Christmas In the Big House & Quarters
Historic Stagville
Dec. 1, Durham
(919) 620-0120
www.ncculture.com

Civil War Christmas
Bentonville
Dec. 1, Four Oaks
(910) 594-0789
www.ncculture.com

Frohliche Weihnachten
German Christmas traditions
Dec. 1, Winston Salem
(336) 924-8191
www.bethabarapark.org

Colonial Christmas
Joel Lane House
Dec. 1, Raleigh
(919) 833-3431
www.joellane.org

Open Studio Tour
Dec. 1–2 & 8–9, Chatham County
(919) 542-6418
www.chathamartistsguild.org

Cookies And Cocoa With Santa
Dec. 1, 8 & 15, Spencer
(704) 636-2889
www.ncculture.com

The Nutcracker
NYC Ballet for Young Audiences
Dec. 2, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Holiday Jubilee
Dec. 2, Fayetteville
(910) 486-1330
www.museumofthecapefear.ncdcr.gov

Christmas Craft Show
Dec. 2, Hillsborough
(919) 245-3330
www.theshopsatdanielboone.com

Candlelight Home Tour
Dec. 2, Hillsborough
(919) 732-8156
www.candlelighttour.com

Christmas Parade
Dec. 2, Kernersville
(336) 993-4521
www.kernersvillenc.com

National Poinsettia Display
Dec. 2, King
(336) 983-4107
www.mnandg.com

The Nutcracker
Dec. 2 & 8–9, Fayetteville
(910) 323-5088
www.ncstateballet.com/performances/nutcracker.html

Christmas In World War II
Dec. 5, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Christmas Tree Lighting
Dec. 6, Fort Bragg
(910) 433-1457
www.fortbraggmwr.com/christmas-tree-lighting

Symphonic Band
Dec. 6, Fayetteville
(910) 630-7100
www.methodist.edu/music/index.htm

Old Fashioned Christmas
Combines parade and tree lighting
Dec. 6–8, Hamlet
(910) 895-9058
www.visitrichmondcounty.com

Paint The Night Away
Adult painting class
Dec. 7, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.facebook.com/PaintTheNightAway

Tour Of Homes
Dec. 7–8, Waxhaw
(704) 843-2006
www.waxhawwomansclub.net

Christmas By Candlelight
Dec. 7 &14, Durham
(919) 477-5498
www.ncculture.com

Blacksmithing Demonstration
Dec. 8, High Point
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

Musical Holiday
Dec. 8, Fayetteville
(910) 433-4690
www.fayettevillesymphony.org

A Cinnamon Christmas
Alamance Battleground
Dec. 8, Burlington
(336) 227-4785
www.ncculture.com

Christmas Story
Professor Brower's TAGS lecture
Dec. 8, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Celebrate Christmas
House in the Horseshoe
Dec. 8, Sanford
(910) 947-2051
www.ncculture.com

Christmas With Polks
Dec. 8, Pineville
(704) 889-7145
www.ncculture.com

Christmas During Civil War
Dec. 8–9, Durham
(919) 383-4345
www.ncculture.com

Holiday House Tour
Dec. 8–9, Chapel Hill
(919) 942-7818
www.chapelhillpreservation.com

It's A Wonderful Life
Dec. 9, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.facebook.com/Earletheatre

Piedmont Chamber Singers
Candlelight Concert
Dec. 9, Winston Salem
(336) 924-8191
www.bethabarapark.org

Candlelight Loft Tours
Dec. 11, Fayetteville
(910) 222-3382
www.faydta.org/candlelight-loft-tour

Emile Pandolfi In Concert
Dec. 11, Hamlet
(910) 410-1691
www.richmondcc.edu

Mount Hollydays Christmas
Dec. 14, Mount Holly
(704) 825-4044

A Christmas Story
Comedy classic
Dec. 14–16, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Christmas Time Is Here
Musical celebration
Dec. 15, Smithfield
(919) 209-2099

Candlelight Christmas
Dec. 15, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Voice Of The Blue Ridge
Bluegrass, old-time music
Dec. 15, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

The Hunts Christmas Concert
Dec. 15, Asheboro
(336) 629-4369

Celebration Of The Nativity
Dec. 16, Lexington
(336) 859-4742

Martina McBride Concert
Dec. 17, Fayetteville
(910) 323-1991
www.community-concerts.com

Flea Drop
New Year's celebration
Dec. 31, Eastover
(910) 323-0707

ONGOING

Maness Pottery & Music Barn
Dinner, music, fellowship
Tuesday nights, Midway
(910) 948-4897
www.liveatclydes.com

Durham Civil War Roundtable
Third Thursdays, Durham
(919) 643-0466

Art After Hours
Second Fridays, Wake Forest
(919) 570-0765
www.sunflowerstudiowf.com

Betty Lynn (Thelma Lou)
Appearance at Andy Griffith Museum
Third Fridays, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.visitmayberry.com

Arts Councils' Fourth Friday
Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.theartscouncil.org

A Yuletide Feaste
Renaissance-style dinner
Through Dec. 1, Fayetteville
(910) 630-7100
www.methodist.edu/music/index.htm

Singing Christmas Tree
Through Dec. 2, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.snydermbc.com

Santa Train
Dec. weekends, Spencer
(704) 636-2889
www.ncculture.com

A Christmas Story
Through Dec. 3, Cary
(919) 460-4980
www.caryplayers.org

Jingle Bell Express
Dec. 5–7, 12–14 & 19–21, Spencer
(704) 636-2889
www.ncculture.com

A Christmas Carol
Through Dec. 9, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.gilberttheater.com

Country Christmas Train
Through Dec. 19, Denton
(336) 859-2755
www.countrychristmastrain.com

Holiday Craft Show
Through Dec. 22, Albemarle
(704) 754-0543
www.fallingriversgallery.com

Hearth & Home Gallery Show
Through Dec. 22, Hillsborough
(919) 643-2500
www.hillsboroughartscouncil.org

Twelve Days Of Christmas
Through Dec. 24, Chapel Hill
(919) 918-2715
www.carolinainn.com

Civil War Commemorative Exhibit
Through Dec. 29, Oxford
(919) 693-1121
www.nccivilwar150.com

Civil War Commemorative Exhibit
Through Dec. 29, Wadesboro
(919) 693-1121
www.nccivilwar150.com

Holidays At The Garden
Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden
Through Dec. 31, Belmont
(704) 825-4490
www.dsbg.org

Music Barn Concerts
Bluegrass
Through Dec. 31, Mt. Gilead
(910) 220-6426
www.mgmusicbarn.com

Poe House Victorian Christmas
Through Jan. 6, Fayetteville
(910) 486-1330
www.museumofthecapefear.ncdcr.gov

Al Norte Al Norte: Latino Life In North Carolina
Through April 28, Raleigh
Prize–winning photographer's images
(919) 807-7900
www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

Winter Show
NC artists exhibition
Dec. 2–Jan. 13, Greensboro
(336) 333-7460
www.greenhillcenter.org

Christmas Pageant
Dec. 4–16, Fayetteville
(910) 323-4234
www.cfrt.org/season.php

Christmas In The Park
Dec. 7–22, Fayetteville
(910) 433-1547
www.fcpr.us/special_events.aspx

Disney On Ice: Rockin' Ever After
Dec. 12–16, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.atthecrown.com

Holiday Lights In The Garden
Dec. 14–29, Fayetteville
(910) 483-4100
www.capefearbg.org

Life As We Know It
Comedic plays about modern distractions
Dec. 27–Jan. 6, Fayetteville
(910) 678-7186
www.gilberttheater.com/2012-2013-season

Coast (east of I-95)

Designers' Workshop
Make holiday ornaments
Dec. 1, Elizabeth City
(252) 335-1453
www.ncculture.com

Christmas Parade
Dec. 1, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.greenvillejaycees.com

Christmas Parade
Dec. 1, Fountain
(252) 329-4200
www.visitgreenvillenc.com

The Raleigh Ringers
Handbell concert
Dec. 1, Greenville
(800) 328-2787
www.ecu.edu

Christmas Flotilla
Dec. 1, Beaufort
(252) 728-7317
www.ncculture.com

Holiday Open House
Museum of the Albemarle
Dec. 1, Elizabeth City
(252) 335-1453
www.ncculture.com

Christmas Parade & BBQ Fundraiser
Benefits Fire & EMS
Dec. 1, Maysville
(910) 743-2709

Christmas At Harmony Hall Plantation
Dec. 1, White Oak
(910) 874-1707
www.harmonyhallnc.com

Fountain Christmas Parade
Dec. 1, Greenville
(252) 749-2881

Christmas Parade
Dec. 1, Greenville
(252) 329-4200

A Coastal Carolina Christmas
Arts, Crafts & Gift Show
Dec. 1, New Bern
(252) 670-7907

Core Sound Decoy Festival
Dec. 1–2, Harkers Island
(252) 838-8818
www.decoyguild.com

Waterfowl Weekend
Dec. 1–2, Harkers Island
(252) 728-1500
www.coresound.com

Moravian Candle Tea
Hosted by Single Brothers House
Dec. 1, 6, 7 & 8, Old Salem
(336) 722-6171
www.homemoravian.org

Somerset Christmas Event
Dec. 2, Creswell
(252) 797-4560
www.ncculture.com

Festival Of Trees
To benefit hospice
Dec. 2-4, Lumberton
(910) 671-5577

Holiday Concert
Dec. 2, Greenville
(800) 328-2787

Gloria
Albemarle Chorale Christmas Concert
Dec. 2, Edenton
(252) 426-5891

Christmas Open House
Poplar Grove
Dec. 2, Wilmington
(910) 686-9518
www.poplargrove.com

Fort Fisher Holiday Open House
Dec. 4, Kure Beach
(919) 458-5538
www.ncculture.com

Candlelight Tours
Aycock Birthplace
Dec. 4 & 6, Fremont
(919) 242-5581
www.ncculture.com

Christmas Parade
Dec. 6, Ayden
(252) 746-2266
www.aydenchamber.com

Gingerbread Workshops
Dec. 7, Elizabeth City
(252) 335-1453
www.ncculture.com

Christmas On Main
Dec. 7, Pollocksville
(252) 671-9711

Christmas Candlelight Tour
Dec. 7–8, Edenton
(252) 482-2637
www.ncculture.com

Christmas "Bear" Trolley Tour
Dec. 7 & 14, New Bern
(252) 637-7316

Christmas Parade
Dec. 8, Winterville
(252) 756-2221

Christmas Parade
Dec. 8, Farmville
(252) 753-5116
www.farmville-nc.com

Christmas Parade
Dec. 8, Bethel
(252) 825-6191
www.bethelnc.org

Colonial Christmas
Dec. 8, Halifax
(252) 583-7191
www.ncculture.com

18th Century Christmas
Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson
Dec. 8, Winnabow
(919) 807-7386
www.ncculture.org

Holiday Jubilee
Museum of the Cape Fear
Dec. 8, Fayetteville
(910) 371-6613
www.ncculture.com

Christmas Open House
Dec. 9, Bath
(252) 923-3971
www.ncculture.com

Gloria
Albemarle Chorale Christmas Concert
Dec. 9, Elizabeth City
(252) 426-5891

Christmas Parade
Dec. 13, Roseboro
(910) 525-4121

Steve Hardy's Original Beach Party
Dec. 20, Greenville
(252) 321-7671

ONGOING

Art Walk
First Friday, Elizabeth City
(252) 335-5330
http://ecncart.com

Art Walk
First Friday, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.uptowngreenville.com

Rocky Hock Opry Christmas Show
Through Dec. 1, Edenton
(252) 340-3438
www.rockyhockplayhouse.com

Celebrate Colonial Christmas
Through Dec. 1, Enfield
(252) 445-3161

The Nutcracker, Down East Dance
Dec. 1–2, 7–9, New Bern
(252) 633-0567
www.newberncivictheatre.org

Festival Of Trees
Family Support Network
Through Dec. 20, Greenville
(252) 328-9332
www.fsnenc.org

Free Tours & Wine Tastings
Through Dec. 30, Rose Hill
(800) 774-9634
www.duplinwinery.com

Holiday Season At Tryon Palace
Through Dec. 31, New Bern
(800) 767-1560
www.tryonpalace.org

Wildlife Artist Society Exhibition
Through Jan. 5, Calabash
(910) 575-5999
www.sunsetrivermarketplace.com/exhibitions.php

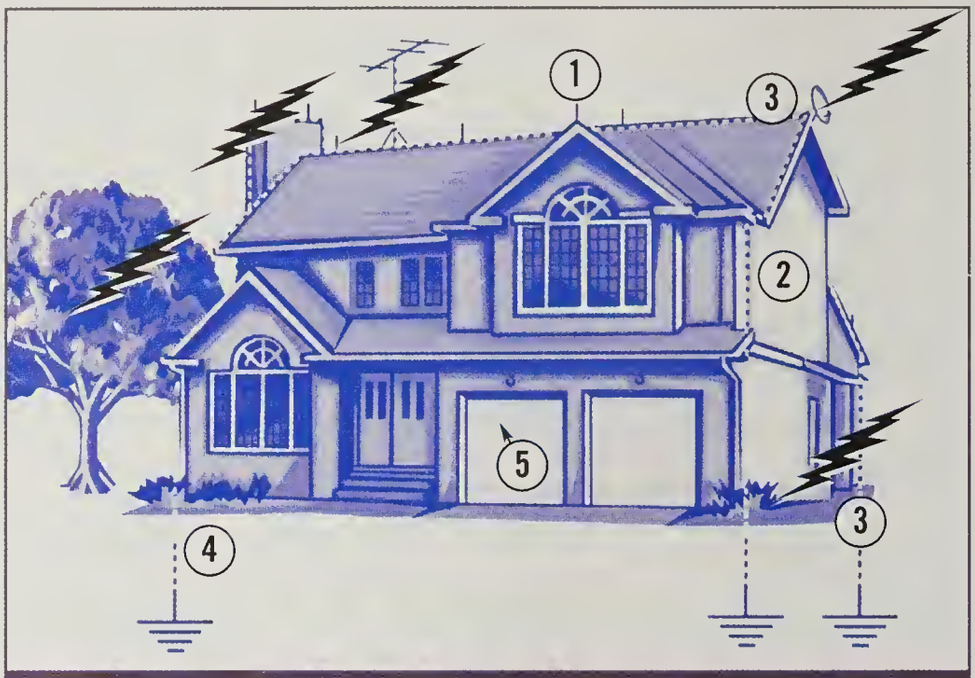
OBXmas Weekends
Through Jan 6, Outer Banks
(252) 473-2138
www.obxmasweekends.com

Community Christmas Cantata
Dec. 9–16, Bath
(252) 923-4140

A complete system for preventing lightning damage

Snap, crackle, pop! Better take cover—it's another lightning storm in the Tar Heel State. In a typical year there are around 500,000 lightning strikes in North Carolina, according to the National Weather Service. Unfortunately, statistics from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration continually show that North Carolina ranks among the highest states in the nation for the number of lightning strikes and the number of deaths.

In addition to the threat of death or serious injury, a lightning strike to an unprotected home can be disastrous as well. Packing up to 100 million volts of electricity, lightning's destructive electricity can explode brick, ignite roofs, sidewalls, framing and induce harmful electrical surges that can destroy sensitive electronics. To prevent this kind of damage to a structure, a complete lightning protection system is the best way to dissipate the dangerous electrical discharge. This system is different than the surge protectors you plug in for computers and HD TV. Surge protectors will not protect your equipment from a lighting strike, only against electrical line surges.



Key elements of the system
1) Air terminals (lightning rods)—spaced according to safety standards. 2) Down conductors—cables connecting the terminals to grounds. 3) Bonding—joining metallic bodies and roof components to ensure conductivity. 4) Grounds—minimum of two ground rods at least 10 feet deep into the earth. 5) Surge arresters—installed at electrical panels and surge suppressors provided for in-house electronics.

How the system works

The system provides a network of low-resistance paths to safely intercept lightning's dangerous electricity and direct it to ground without impact to structure or occupants. The system neither attracts nor repels a strike, but receives the strike and routes it harmlessly into the earth. Surge protection devices (SPD) must be incorporated to provide a barrier against transient surges.

A complete system includes strike termination devices (lightning rods), down conductors, bonding, grounding and surge protection for an electrical panel or meter, along with surge protection devices for telephone, cable, satellite, electrical lines and communication systems entering the structure. Materials and equipment should be UL-listed and properly labeled.

Who can install

Lightning protection is not a do-it-yourself project. Complete systems must be designed and installed in accordance with accepted industry safety standards of the Lightning Protection Institute (LPI), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Only experienced UL-listed/LPI-certified contractors or qualified electricians should install the systems. These qualified specialists use UL-listed materials and ensure that installation complies with the above safety standards. To find certified installers in your area, visit www.lightning.org.

—National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Lightning Protection Institute, a nationwide not-for-profit organization based in Richmond, Va.

When outdoors, take cover when you hear thunder

Data from the National Weather Service show that lightning strikes are fatal in approximately 10 percent of strike victims. Another 70 percent of survivors suffer serious, long-term effects.

Outdoors is the most dangerous place to be during a lightning storm. The Electrical Safety Foundation International recommends these guidelines to stay safe:

- If possible, go indoors. Once indoors, stay away from windows and doors. Do not use corded telephones except for emergencies.
- Unplug electronic equipment before the storm arrives and avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords during storms.
- Avoid contact with plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets.
- If outdoors, go to a low point. Lightning hits the tallest object. Stay away from trees.
- Avoid metal. Don't hold metal items or stand near metal sheds, poles and fences.

—National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association

Web resources
www.flash.org | www.floridadisaster.org | www.fema.org | www.ready.gov

Business Opportunities

WATKINS SINCE 1868. Top Ten Home Business. 350 products everyone uses. Free catalog packet. 1-800-352-5213.

WHAT ARE YOUR DREAMS? Are you truly MOTIVATED to WORK to achieve them? Provide info, watch 3 videos next page. www.WeFoundAFuture.com/12569

Vacation Rental

CHERRY GROVE CHANNEL HOUSE (North Myrtle Beach), 4br, 3½ baths, call 919-542-8146.

EMERALO ISLE CAMP OCEAN FOREST Campground. Camping next to the ocean. Call 252-354-3454 for reservations.

BEACH HOUSE, N. Myrtle Beach, SC. 4BR/2B, sleeps 12–14. 828-478-3208. Request photos: bnagel36@charter.net

MOUNTAIN CONOO, 2BR/2BA, BLOWING ROCK area. By month only, 321-269-2944.

RV LEASE LOT, KERR LAKE $1800/YEAR includes water and septic hookups. Large 45' x 55' lots. Metered electric. Near Kimbal Point. Dock available. 252-456-5236.

OAK ISLAND, NC BEACH. 4BR. www.angelsrest.info

Gold Maps

FUN, HOW TO PAN. Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, California. 1-321-783-4595. WWW.GOLDMAPS.COM

How to Place a Classified Ad

Deadlines

For publication in Carolina Country magazine, submit your ad by the 25th of the month approximately 5 weeks before publication (e.g., June ad due April 25). Orders received after deadline will be published in the following issue.

Costs & Word Limitations

- For Carolina Country magazine: $2 per word ($20 minimum per ad). Maximum of 75 words.
- Every word counts, including "a" or "the." A phone number counts as one word (enter these as 555-555-5555). A website address counts as one word.
- Payment must accompany order. We accept Visa, MasterCard or American Express, or make checks payable to "Carolina Country."
- No refunds. No discounts.

Ads That Reoccur Monthly

If you'd like to repeat the same ad for a number of months, we can set you up. You'll need to use a credit card for payment.

How to Send

Use our website's form to compose your ad and pay by credit card. You can also fill out online and print a different form (PDF format) if you'd like to pay by check. Or call us and we'll mail you a form. Return the ad information and check (payable to "Carolina Country") to: Carolina Country Classifieds, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611-7306.

Classified ads will not be accepted by phone.

Other Guidelines

- Limit 2 ads per month per advertiser.
- Ads accepted on a space-available basis.
- First-column line printed in uppercase.
- No "personals" accepted.

For More Information

Call Jenny Lloyd at 800-662-8835, ext. 3091.

Real Estate

4 TEN ACRE LOTS IN ORANGE COUNTY, 15 miles to Chapel Hill; 4 miles to I-85 & I-40; 4 miles to NC Hwy 54. $74,975/lot–10% discount for more than one lot. John M. Jordan, Saxapahaw, NC 27340. (w) 336-376-3122, (m) 336-214-3650, (h) 336-376-3132. john@jordanproperties.com

For Sale

BAPTISTRY PAINTINGS–JOROAN RIVER SCENES. Custom Painted. Christian Arts, Goldsboro, NC 1-919-736-4166. www.christian-artworks.com

USEO PORTABLE SAWMILLS and COMMERCIAL SAWMILL EQUIPMENT! Buy/Sell. Call Sawmill Exchange 800-459-2148, USA & Canada, www.sawmillexchange.com

USEO RENTAL WORK CLOTHES–pants $4.99, shirts $3.99, jackets $10.95. Call 1-800-233-1853 or order online www.usedworkclothing.com

WANTEO TO BUY OLO JUKEBOXES & Slot Machines–704-847-6472.

USEO PEWS FOR SALE, Great for start up churches or refinished and new fabric added for new churches. Also build new pews. Website www.commercialrefinishers.com, e-mail ebland@commercialrefinishers.com. Phone 910-590-4364.

METAL ROOFING FACTORY OIRECT visit us at our 5 Carolina locations 336-625-9727, Asheboro; 919-775-1667, Sanford; 704-732-4007, Lincolnton; 828-686-3860, Asheville; 864-228-2800, Greenville. Shop online at www.triadmetalroof.com

COMPUTER ZONE HAS Christmas specials!!! $149 laptops with warranty!! These are fast high speed internet ready Pentium 4 Dells. These $149.00 laptops have CD Burner/DVD combo and WIFI. Get a Dell from us and save lots of money. We are a full service computer store offering the lowest price computers in North Carolina. Tell your family we're getting a Dell for Christmas!! Get your Dell today! COMPUTER ZONE in Kernersville and Winston Salem 336-996-7727. Shipping available.

CRAWFORO HOME IMPROVEMENTS–Change the look of your home! Laminate flooring start at $0.89/SF. 336-331-3427 or www.crawfordhomeimprovements.net

A book of collected "You Know You're From Carolina Country If..." submissions from Carolina Country magazine readers. You know you're from Carolina country if you say "Laud ham mercy!" 96 pages, illustrated, 4 by 5½ inches. Only $7 per book (includes shipping and tax). Call and we'll send you a form to mail back (919-875-3091) or buy with a credit card at our secure online site at www.carolinacountry.com.

"CAROLINA COUNTRY REFLECTIONS" More than 200 photographs showing life in rural North Carolina before 1970. Each picture has a story that goes with it. Hardcover, coffee table book, 160 pages. Only $35 (includes tax and shipping). Order online www.carolinacountry.com or call 919-875-3091.

Miscellaneous

PLAY GOSPEL SONGS BY EAR–$12.95. "Learn Gospel Music." Chording, runs, fills–$12.95. Both $24. Davidsons, 6727C Metcalf, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66204. 913-262-4982.

OIVORCE MAOE EASY. Uncontested, in prison, alien, lost ran away. $179.95. Phone 417-443-6511, 10am–10pm.

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Red Velvet Whoopie Pies

- 1 package (2-layer) white cake mix
- 3 egg whites
- ¾ cup water
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 (4 ounces) semi-sweet chocolate, melted
- 1 tablespoon red food coloring
- 4 cups marshmallows
- 1 (4 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 tub (8 ounces) Cool Whip whipped topping, thawed
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Beat first 4 ingredients in large bowl with mixer 2 minutes. Stir in melted chocolate and food coloring. Drop 2 tablespoons batter, 2 inches apart, into 36 mounds on baking sheets sprayed with cooking spray. Bake 12 to 14 minutes or until toothpick inserted in centers comes out almost clean. Cool on baking sheets 3 minutes. Remove to wire racks; cool completely.

Microwave marshmallows in large microwaveable bowl on high 2 minutes or until melted, stirring after 1 minute; cool slightly. Add cream cheese; mix until blended. Gently stir in Cool Whip. Spread 2 tablespoons marshmallow mixture on bottom side of each of 18 cookies; top with remaining cookies. Sprinkle with sugar before serving.

From Your Kitchen

Pumpkin Cake

- 1 box Duncan Hines Golden Butter cake mix
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin
- ½ cup milk
- ⅓ cup oil
- 4 eggs
- 1½ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

Icing:

- Remaining can of pumpkin
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 container (8 ounces) Cool Whip
- ½ teaspoon pumpkin spice mix
- ¼ cup Hershey caramel topping

Grease and flour two 9-inch cake pans and set aside.

Mix together cake mix, milk, oil, eggs, pumpkin pie spice and only 1 cup of the pumpkin.

Pour in cake pans equally and bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until done. Let cool for 10 minutes and remove from cake pans onto cooling rack. Cool completely and cut layers in half giving you four layers.

In a mixing bowl, mix remaining pumpkin and cream cheese. Continue mixing adding powdered sugar, pumpkin pie spices and Cool Whip; mix until creamy and fluffy. Stack cake layers with this mixture between each layer, then ice the sides. Do not ice top of cake! Pour caramel sauce on top layer and let it drizzle down sides of cake.

This recipe comes from Joseph Cooke of State Road, a member of Surry Yadkin EMC.

Send Us Your Recipes

Contributors whose recipes are published will receive $25. We retain reprint rights for all submissions. Recipes submitted are not necessarily entirely original. Include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Mail to: Carolina Country Kitchen, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 or E-mail to: Jenny.Lloyd@carolinacountry.com.

One Bowl Cranberry Bark

- 1 cup dried cranberries
- ⅓ cup chopped pecans, toasted
- 2 packages (6 squares each) white chocolate, melted

Stir cranberries and nuts into chocolate; spread onto waxed paper-covered baking sheet.

Refrigerate one hour or until firm. Break into pieces.

Cheesy Green Bean Casserole

- 2 packages (16 ounces each) frozen French-cut green beans, thawed, drained
- 1 can (10¾ ounces) condensed cream of mushroom soup
- ½ pound (8 ounces) Velveeta, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1½ cups hot water
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 package (6 ounces) Stove Top stuffing mix for chicken

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Combine beans and soup in a 2-quart casserole; top with Velveeta.

Add water to butter in medium bowl; stir until melted. Stir in stuffing mix just until moistened. Spoon over bean mixture. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until heated through.

Serves 14

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